Gadgets: Consumer Electronics Show 2010 roundup

14 January 2010, By Gregg Ellman

With the annual Consumer Electronic Show taking over Las Vegas last week, an endless number of products were introduced and on display.

Many are gimmicks and not practical for daily use but here is a sample of some that caught my attention:

The Klipsch LightSpeaker combines efficient LED lighting and wireless ambient sound in a single unit.

It's installed just like a light bulb and works anywhere a standard light bulb is used, including can lighting, hanging fixtures or floor lamps.

To play music, just connect the included transmitter to any music source (iPod, laptop, etc.) and the sound is wirelessly sent to the LightSpeaker. Each transmitter has the wireless ability to accommodate up to eight LightSpeakers.

In addition to the speaker, each unit contains a dimmable LED bulb, which is rated for 40,000 hours of use and can last more than 15 years.

It will be available as a bundled package with two LightSpeakers, a transmitter, radio frequency remote, mini jack to RCA plug cable, lenses and trim for $599. Single LightSpeakers will cost $249 each.

Klipsch will have them on klipsch.com later this month, with broader distribution slated for March.

Details: klipsch.com

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If you thought it was a great jump from USB 1.0 to USB 2.0, Western Digital (WD) will help you make the move to USB 3.0.

This week they introduced their fastest hard drive ever with the My Book 3 external hard drive.

The new desktop external drive is certified with the SuperSpeed USB 3.0 interface, which is considerably faster than USB 2.0.

According to WD, the SuperSpeed USB 3.0 interface on My Book 3.0 drives provides transfer rates of up to 5 gigabits-per-second, allowing users to open and save files up to 4.7 times faster than USB 2.0. WD does note this can vary depending on the computer system.

What this means to a user is it will significantly reduces the time it takes to transfer, open and save large files.

The 1 TB capacity drive is at WD retailers or on shopwd.com in a USB 3.0 kit ($199.99) or as a standalone unit ($179.99). Later this month a 2 TB model will be available.

Details: westerndigital.com

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Pandigital has an innovative digital picture frame, The Photo Mail LED Digital Photo Frame.

The frame is e-mail-connected and powered by AT&T, which accepts the photos e-mailed directly to its dedicated e-mail address without any ongoing service fee.

The 8-inch LED frame comes with a dedicated e-mail address and anyone who knows the address can e-mail photos to the frame.

Once the photos are received, the user simply accepts them and they are then available for viewing.

The frame comes with the ability to have 300 photos e-mailed to it and once they are used up, additional photos can be purchased for $9.99 for 100 e-mailed photos, $29.99 for 400 and $49.99 for 700.

Photos are sent via ATT wireless network without the need of WiFi.

The Snapfish photo service handles the photo management and makes the images viewable on the frame's Snapfish.com account.

In addition, the frame has all the standard features of Pandigital digital frames including a large 8-inch back-lit LED display in 800-by-600 resolution, 1GB of internal memory and a 6-in-1 built-in media card reader for uploading photos.

The frame will be available in later this quarter for $149.

Details: pandigital.net

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Dual Electronics Corp.'s GPS Navigation and Battery Cradle (model XGPS300) turns an iPod touch into a portable GPS unit.

A GPS receiver is built into the cradle, which houses the touch and also acts as an addition battery source.

Dual's NavAtlas app is included, which gives users turn-by-turn navigation with TTS technology and the latest U.S and Canada maps from NAVTEQ.

Users will also benefit from many additional features including an amplified speaker, auto out connections, a Mini USB port and a rechargeable battery.

The cradle works as a handheld device or as an in-car unit. It provides GPS location data to any app that needs it including those for hiking, geocaching or even hiking.

Expect the device to be available sometime during the first quarter in the $179 to $199 range.

Details: gpscradle.dualav.com

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Everyone has heard of wireless Internet, but how about wireless power?

Fulton Innovation is creator and exclusive licensor of eCoupled intelligent wireless power.

Once the wireless power transmitter is installed in things like desktops or countertops a simple device such as a blender or laptop computer will function like it is plugged into an outlet.

If the device has a rechargeable battery built in, it will also charge while in contact with the transmitter.

The company is partnering with computer, mobile phone, home appliance, furniture, and other manufacturers to integrate eCoupled technology into devices.

Companies such with Motorola, Bosch, Dell and Texas Instruments are working with the company to make some of their products wireless power compatible.

When pressed for an answer if Apple was on board for the wireless power, company representatives wouldn't budge for any kind of answer except to say that Apple would be a very good partner.

Prices depend on the device needing to be powered. For example a blender, which has the wireless power receiver built-in, would require you to put a $50 - $60 transmitter into a countertop.

The transmitter would be able to power high wattage appliances or any other device with the built-in wireless power receiver.

Details: ecoupled.com

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Three new portable iPhone and iPod speaker

accessories with rechargeable lithium ion batteries have been announced from iHome.

Designed for portability, they let you travel with your music away or just you can place it in any room.

The iP48 Portable Rechargeable Stereo Alarm Clock for iPhone/iPod is in a protective travel case for portability.

The unit also has a flip up clock display and a time sync feature to set the clock to local time when you dock an iPhone.

The iP48 is expected to sell for $149 this spring.

With the iP49 Alarm Clock & FM Radio for iPhone/iPod, users will get a unit that features iHome's high-end clock radio functions.

This includes the choice of waking up or going to sleep with music from an iPod, iPhone or FM radio.

The unit can get an audio boost with the inclusion of Bongiovi Acoustics' patented Digital Power Station technology and four neodymium compression drivers.

Expect it out in the spring with a price of $169.

For those who just want speakers, iHM79 Rechargeable Mini Speakers are available for $49. The speaker pair is small enough to fit in the palm of your hand and can be charged via USB.

Users can hook them up directly to an iPod, computer or any other device with a 3.5mm audio jack and can be collapsed down for great portability.

Details: ihomeaudio.com

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Many people spend several hundred dollars for a portable GPS unit and Lowepro, a product design company known for their storage solutions for photography equipment and portable electronics, has launched the Navi collection to house these expensive gadgets.

The line has six protective models, which will be available in February for both handheld and portable mobile GPS devices.

Some highlights include the 3.5-inch Navi Bag to protect a GPS unit in the wilderness.

It has a fast-action draw cord and carabineer to keep the device easily accessible even with gloved hands. The exterior is made of stretchy neoprene with a soft interior fabric to protect the touch screen from dust, scratches and abrasion. A built-in, zippered side pocket holds two AA-sized batteries, making the pouch an ideal solution for a long hike.

The Navi Plus has two cases in one compact design.

The main case has two outer side pockets sized for USB and power cords, and mesh pocket for a battery, extra cords or a small manual. It also has a padded adjustable divider to create space for a dashboard/windshield mount.

Fitted within the main compartment is a second removable GPS case with brushed tricot fabric and reinforced exterior which can be transported between vehicles

Details: lowepro.com/gps, prices of the six models range from $19.99 to $34.99

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Scosche Industries has some additions to its iPod/iPhone accessory lineup.

These days everyone has multiple electronic gadgets needing a daily charge, which is where Scosche's handy reviveLITE comes in.

The unit has been given an upgrade to act as a nightlight, charge and iPod/iPhone.

Now the design has an additional USB charging port for other USB powered devices while charging an iPod or iPhone cable free.

Also new are IDR655m earphones with tapLINE II Remote and Mic.

It has an improved noise isolating, which feature 11mm drivers to deliver brilliant highs, silky smooth mids and powerful bass.

Scosche placed the headphone controls where the earphone wires split, making switching tracks or adjusting the volume easy.

A microphone for handsfree conversations is on the headphone cord. Also included are small, medium, and large single and dual flanged silicone inserts to get the proper comfort and sound.

Details: scosche.com

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For those wanting to show some fashion while using an iPod or iPhone, iWave has launched another line of personal technology accessories.

The Crystal Clear Collection consists of earbuds, headphones and cases ranging from $12.99 to $29.99 and is expected to be available in the second quarter of this year.

Designed for women, the products are described as adorned with awe-inspiring Crystallize - Swarovski Elements in a company press release.

For the most part they are designed so women can use the media devices as matching accessories for daytime or eveningwear.

Details: iWaveAudio.com

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